# Jonathan Helps David Escape



**Scripture Reference:** 1 Samuel 18:1-11 and chapter 20

**Suggested Theme:** God is our loving and faithful friend. We should show faithfulness and love to our friends.

**Memory Verse:** “Peace of mind means a healthy body. But jealousy will rot your bones.” Proverbs 14:30, ICB

## Story Overview:

David moved to Saul’s house. Saul often asked him to play the harp for him when he was upset. Saul became jealous when the people began to prefer David over him. In his jealousy, he threw a spear at David and tried to kill him. Saul’s son, Jonathan, was David’s friend, and he helped David escape from Saul.

## Background Study:

Even very young children can relate to the idea of friendship. In their interactions on the playground or at school, they understand the difference between loyal friends and bullies.

Only David and his family and the elders at Bethlehem knew that Samuel had anointed David as the future king of Israel. David led a normal life otherwise. Because he was a good musician, he seems to have become a part-time musician to the king. David still lived at home and went to the king when he was needed (1 Samuel 16:14-23).

Although we sometimes think of Jonathan and David as very young when this story occurred, they were grown men. David was no longer the young man who occasionally came to soothe the king with music. The battle with Goliath had already taken place. The two men had fought in several battles together since that time. David was married to Saul’s daughter (1 Samuel 18:17-29).

Jonathan and David made a vow of friendship and sealed it with gifts. Jonathan gave David his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt (1 Samuel 18:1-4).

The two men were friends despite King Saul’s growing rage-filled jealousy. David’s victory over Goliath and subsequent battles changed him from an obscure rural shepherd to a national hero. Songs were even sung in the street praising David over King Saul. Each time Saul sent David into a new battle, he was victorious, and the people loved him even more (1 Samuel 18:5-16).

Saul must have felt trapped. On the one hand, he wanted to kill David and get him out of the way, but on the other hand, he needed to maintain the goodwill of his subjects. Over time, Saul made more than one attempt against David’s life. David ran from Saul, but Jonathan worked hard for reconciliation. Sadly, this was not successful.


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Reading 1 Samuel chapters 18-20 is helpful in understanding the context of this friendship and escape. The chapters can be broken down as follows:

David and Jonathan's friendship. Saul's growing jealousy. David marries King Saul's daughter.

**1 Samuel 18**

David and Jonathan's friendship. Saul's growing jealousy. David marries King Saul's daughter.

**1 Samuel 19:1-24**

Saul wants to kill David, but Jonathan intervenes. Saul's daughter (David's wife) helps David escape Saul. David goes to live with the prophet Samuel, and Saul attempts to hunt him down.

**1 Samuel 20:1-34**

David returns to secretly meet with Jonathan. Jonathan attempts to make peace between his father and David, but King Saul is set on killing David. Saul even attempts to kill Jonathan for taking David's side.

**1 Samuel 20:35-42**

As this was going on, David had remained hidden. Now, using a set of secret signals involving arrows, Jonathan made it known to David that there was no hope of a reconciliation with King Saul. After a sad parting, David leaves the court and his friend permanently.

At the conclusion, these two men parted in tears. Although they would not be together, David never forgot his friend. When David finally became king many years later, he showed kindness to Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth.

David was to spend many years on the run from Saul. The king did not need to worry about David. Although Samuel had anointed David as the future king, David waited his turn. He respected the king's position and would not take the kingdom by force. The king's jealousy ruined many lives.

## Way to Introduce the Story:

Discuss good friends that you have had and share some adventures with the class. Photos of you and some friends (as adults or children) would be good. Perhaps the children can share some things they have done with their friends. "In today's story, we are going to learn about two men who were very good friends. They were friends even when bad things began to happen to one of them."

## The Story:

Sometimes, Saul was sad and liked to hear music played on a harp. Occasionally, he liked to hear people sing good songs. It made him feel better. Saul knew that David could sing and play the harp. King Saul invited David to come to the palace sometimes to play and sing for him.

When David was at the palace, he often saw Saul's oldest son, Jonathan. David and Jonathan became very good friends. They promised each other that they would always be friends, no matter what happened. Jonathan wanted to show David that he loved him as a friend. He gave David his tunic and the robe that he was wearing. He also gave him other gifts. He gave David his belt and sword; He even gave him his bow and arrows. It made Jonathan happy to give gifts to his friend.

Everyone seemed to like David. Everyone talked about how brave David was. The women even sang songs about brave David. Jonathan was glad that people liked David. When good things happened to David,


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Jonathan was happy for his friend.

But Jonathan's father, King Saul, was not happy for David. Sometimes, when David played his harp for Saul, Saul started thinking about all of the good things that had happened to David. He thought the people might like David better than their king! Saul became very jealous. The Bible says that Saul had a "jealous eye." That meant that Saul always watched David and wished for the things that David had. Saul was jealous that the people liked David. Saul was jealous that Jonathan liked David. Soon, everything that Saul saw about David made him jealous.

When people get jealous, it sometimes makes them do bad things. Jealousy can also make us angry. One day, Saul got so angry that he threw a spear at David. David was able to get out of the way just in time, and he ran away.

When Jonathan heard about what happened to his friend, he quickly went to talk to David.

"Don't worry, David," said Jonathan. "I will talk to my father. I'm sure he will be sorry for what he did!"

Jonathan talked to King Saul about David. Jonathan reminded Saul that David was a good man and loved God very much. Saul told Jonathan he was sorry for what he had done. He said that he would not do it again.

But Saul did do it again. Later, he tried to kill David with his spear again. David was able to jump out of the way and run away.

Jonathan was very sad when he heard about what his father had done to David. He told David to hide while he talked to his father again. David hid by some stones.

"Stay hidden by the stones," said Jonathan. After I talk to my father, I will come back to this place and shoot some arrows. Listen carefully. If you hear me tell my helper that the arrows are far away, then you will know that you are in danger from Saul. That will be my special signal to you."

Jonathan went to find his father. When Jonathan talked to Saul about David, Saul became very angry. He did not like David. He hated David. He even ordered some men to try to find David and kill him. Jonathan tried to take up for his friend. When Jonathan said that David was good, Saul became angry. He was so angry that he even threw a spear at his son, Jonathan.

Jonathan was very sad. He was sorry that his father was so jealous and mean. He knew he had to give a message to David so that David could run away and be safe. Jonathan took his bow and arrows out to the field and shot an arrow far away. The helper who was with him ran to find the arrow. Jonathan yelled to him to go very far to find it.

Later, when the boy returned to the palace, David came out of his hiding place to talk to Jonathan. They were both very sad, and they both cried. David knew he had to leave his friend.

"Just remember, Jonathan, we will always be friends," said David.

"Yes, I will always remember you," answered Jonathan.

David left Jonathan and the palace and did not return for many years. Saul was jealous of David for the rest of his life. David had to always move from place to place because Saul tried to chase and hurt him. David and Jonathan never saw each other again.

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## Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.


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Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source: http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/david-jonathan/

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## Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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**Review:**

- Why did Saul ask David to come to the palace? (To sing and play his harp for Saul)
- Who was David's best friend? (Jonathan)
- What gifts did Jonathan give to David? (Tunic, robe, belt, bows and arrows, and his sword)
- What did Saul feel towards David? (Jealousy)
- What did Saul do to David when he got very jealous? (He threw a spear at him)
- When David left, what did he promise Jonathan? (That they would always be friends)
- Why did David have to hide from Saul and his friend Jonathan for many years after this? (Saul wanted to kill David)
- What did you learn about God from this story?
- What did you learn about people from this story?

**Reflection:**

- What part of this story is most interesting to you?
- What is something you wonder about in this story?
- What do you think the field and stones David hid by looked like?
- How do you think David and Jonathan felt when Saul threw a spear at both of them?
- How do you think David and Jonathan felt when they had to say goodbye?
- Jonathan helped David escape, even though that meant Jonathan might be in trouble with King Saul. What makes someone a good friend?
- Do you have a best friend? Tell us about them. Where did you meet? What do you like to do together?
- Have you ever had to tell a friend goodbye? Have you ever had to run from danger like David? How did you feel?
- Is God your friend? What is one thing you love about God?


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## Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

## Song Suggestions:

- Ha-la-la-la Song
- Books of the Old Testament Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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## Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

**Activities:**

- Discuss gifts that you have exchanged with friends.
- Draw a big eye on the board or a piece of paper. Have the children read 1 Samuel 18:9 . Some versions of the Bible say Saul kept a “jealous” eye on David, and others say he kept a “close” eye. In either case, Sault viewed David differently and critically. Discuss what can happen when we are jealous (fighting, stealing, refusing to talk to each other, not being friends, etc.)
- Look up “jealousy” and “envy” in the dictionary.
- Place items found in the story inside a pillow slip or bag. Let the children pull out one item at a time and tell how it relates to the story. (spear, belt, tunic, bow and arrows, songbook)
- Discuss how David played and sang for Saul. Plan a trip to sing to someone who is elderly or unable to attend church.
- Let the children sit in a circle and pass a beanbag (or any item) around the circle from one person to the next. You (or a child you have chosen) should keep your eyes closed as the bag passes. At any given time – clap your hands once. The child holding the bag when you clapped should say one good thing about having a friend who believes in God.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

**Crafts:**

- Make friendship bracelets or any gift to give to a friend.
- Cut pictures from magazines depicting things that people can be jealous of. Glue these pictures on a large piece of paper and title the page “Jealousy.”


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Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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## Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and puzzle worksheets  (Calvary Curriculum)
- Craft: Friendship activities (Corner on character )
- Activities: Kindergarten friendship activities (Counselor Keri)

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